

John Longe

7827
Saint PAUL's Doctrine

OF

JUSTIFICATION by FAITH,

EXPLAINED

IN THREE

DISCOURSES,

Preached before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

In the Year 1760.

BY

K
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M.DCC.LX.



P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourses owe their birth not so much to choice as chance. A certain teacher among the METHODISTS was led this last winter, to try the success of his preaching before the University of Cambridge. His Subject, the reader need hardly be told, was Justification by Faith alone, without Works: in treating of which, he did so cry up the superlative excellency of Faith, and did so run down all the poor pretences, which good Works could make for themselves, and at proper intervals did so seasonably intermix what he called his arguments with such severe and cutting reflections upon his brethren of the Clergy, as could not but administer the most seasonable correction and admonition to the more learned part of his audience, and afford the greatest edification and comfort to that mob of rustics which flocked to hear him from every quarter.

The ludicrous reflections, that took place in the Author's mind on first hearing these strange doctrines, soon gave way to others of a more serious

nature. He now began to look upon what had passed in a quite different light from that, in which it first appeared to him. He had heard the Clergy of the Church of England most injuriously misrepresented, and the whole body of the University personally insulted to their face: These were things, which, as a Minister of one, and a Member of the other, he could but ill digest; and such an effect these considerations had upon him, as to urge or rather provoke him to enter the lists himself against this formidable advocate of modern Methodism, and, to endeavour, in the following three Discourses, to rescue the Subject of Justification by Faith from the dishonours, which he conceived were put upon it by this unfair and uncandid adversary.

The same considerations, which then prevailed upon him to preach, have, added to others of a more private nature, now prevailed upon him to publish his Discourses; not, he assures the world, out of a fond hope of their having any good effect upon the persons and doctrines here exposed, — alas! he knows too well the weakness and inefficacy of the carnal weapon of human reason when opposed to the internal demonstration of the Spirit,

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Spirit, — but in order to let his more sober readers see, of what parts and principles this same Methodism is composed, and on what weak and frivolous arguments it is supported; when it pretends, as it always does pretend, to ground itself on Scripture.

And although, in delivering his own opinion in this matter, he was forced to make way for it by removing that of another; yet he hopes this is done with that respect and deference, which is due to a character, so much superior to his own.

The peculiar excellence of this opinion seems to him to consist in this: that, allowing the defenders of Methodism all that they desire; granting them that by Faith is meant nothing more than a bare Profession of belief in Christ, abstracted from the fruits of it which may or may not appear in the life and conversation; allowing too, that by Works is to be understood the Works of Morality, as well as the Ceremonies of the Jewish Law; it yet is able to unfold the general argument of the Epistle to the Romans on one uniform and perfect plan, and to make the doctrine of St. Paul consistent with itself and with other parts of Scripture.

*Dr. Sam.
Clarke's
Opin.*

A notion, attended with so many and great advantages, it is not to be wondered, if it has always found the most illustrious Patrons to espouse and defend it. Accordingly we find it has been maintained by some of the most Learned Divines, that have appeared in this or in the last Century. The excellent Dr. BARROW, as his manner is, has treated it at large, and enforced it by the most cogent and convincing method of just reasoning. From him, as the Author supposes, it was adopted by the celebrated Archbishop TILLOTSON. It is advanced by that judicious commentator, WHITBY, in a large Preface to his Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians. Bishop BLACKALL has a whole Sermon upon it, which he preached before the University of Cambridge, at the Commencement, in the year 1700. And it has been lately revived and improved in TAYLOR's Key to the Apostolic Writings, which he prefixes to his Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans.

Bishop BULL, it must be confessed, in what he calls his Harmonia Apostolica, opposes this opinion; and treats the notion of two Justifications, a first and final, as false in itself, and foreign to the design both of St. Paul and St. James. His

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*argument is this: that no one is entitled to the favour of even a first Justification, who hath not performed the works of Repentance; and therefore works are necessary as well to the first Justification as the second. The learned Writer was not aware that he was here contradicting the whole tenor of St. Paul's writings, who constantly ascribes the Justification of a Heathen to mere Grace and Favour, only: * he seems too to have forgot, that, at the time when this first Justification was conferred, the Gentile-Christians are described as dead in trespasses and sins, and consequently in no capacity of claiming such a blessing by any works of their own; and he mistakes the promise for the performance of Repentance.†*

* Eph. ii. 9.

† *The Bishop's words are these. Reformati hoc falso nituntur fundamento, quòd primam justificationem fide solâ sine operibus homini contingere arbitrentur, quod nequaquam concedi debet. Nemo enim vel ad primam justificationis gratiam pervenire potest, qui penitentiæ opera non præstiterit. But then he immediately adds, Haud tamen diffitebor, opera ea, quæ primam justificationem præcedunt, longè minora ac pauciora esse iis, quæ jam justificatum sequuntur. A concession, which in the author's opinion, more than half invalidates his argument.*

*Bulli
Opera
a Grabe
h. 442.*

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St. P A U L's Doctrīne

OF

Justification by Faith.

A



DISCOURSE I.

ROMANS III. 28.

Therefore we conclude, that a Man is Justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.

THE Writers of the New Testament having frequently asserted, that Men are *Justified and Saved by Faith and by Grace, without the Works of the Law*; whilst, in other places, they no less frequently exhort us to *add to our Faith Virtue*, and by Works to *make our Calling and Election SURE*; with many other Expressions of the like import: Great Confusion and Obscurity have been from hence unjustly charged upon the Scriptures; and innumerable difficulties and prejudices have arisen, no less dishonourable to the cause of pure and genuine Christianity, than destructive of the Peace, the Morality, and the Religion of Mankind. It would be an endless, as well as an unprofitable task, to collect and repeat the various methods that have been invented, in order to remove an inconsistency from the

sacred Writings, which at first sight appears so striking and so formidable; all of them equally professing to be built on the sure word of Inspiration, all directly contrary to each other, and, as we may fairly presume of the greatest part of them at least, utterly repugnant as well to the true and real meaning of Scripture (fairly interpreted,) as to the unerring dictates of sound Reason and Judgment.

A celebrated Writer,* justly eminent for his abilities in every branch of Science, Natural, Moral, and Religious; and amidst whose multifarious excellencies none shines out with a more distinguished lustre, than his admirable skill in interpreting the Scriptures; beholding, with a generous indignation and concern, the pernicious errors, in Practice as well as Speculation, which had been grafted on the wild and irregular notions of former Expositors, professedly set himself to the examination of this difficulty. And it would have been strange indeed, where almost every quality both of head and heart concurred to form and to perfect the Interpreter, if something very extraordinary had not been produced from such an enquiry, worthy of that superior and exalted station, which he was so universally allowed to fill in the world of Letters.

* Dr. Samuel Clarke.

His opinion, as it is delivered in his own words, is this: † That “ St. *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, designing on one hand “ to magnify the Gospel by setting forth its “ sufficiency to Salvation, and on the other “ hand to demonstrate the insufficiency and “ unneccessariness of the ceremonial Observances of the *Jewish* Law;” (which, we are told, “ is indeed the principal, if not the only scope and design of the Apostle in this “ Epistle;) does all along make use of such “ *Terms* to express the Christian and *Jewish* “ Religion by, as may best serve to set forth “ the excellency of the one, and diminish the “ opinion which men had taken up of the “ necessity of the other.” Thus, “ because the “ first and most fundamental duty of the Gospel is, *believing* in God, and *believing* that “ most perfect Revelation of his Will, which he “ has made to mankind by Jesus Christ; whereas, on the contrary, the principal part of that “ Religion which the Judaizing Christians so “ earnestly contended for, was an anxious “ observance of the burdensome rites of the “ Ceremonial Law; therefore the Apostle calls

† See his Sermon on Gal. ii. 15, 16. entitled, *On the End and Design of the Jewish Law*. The same opinion is delivered by this Author, and in the same words, in his *Three Practical Essays on Baptism, Confirmation, and Repentance*. See Chap. 4. of the *Essay on Confirmation*.

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“ the Christian Religion *Faith*, and the *Jewish*
 “ Religion *the Law*.” For the same Reason,
 “ because the Christian Religion teaches us to
 “ expect salvation not from our own merits,
 “ but from the *Grace* of God, that is, accord-
 “ ing to the terms of that new and gracious
 “ Covenant, wherein sincere repentance will
 “ be accepted instead of unfinning obedience;
 “ whereas, on the contrary, the *Jews* depended
 “ upon their exact performance of the works of
 “ the Law;” (meaning by *Law* here, as before,
 the ceremonies of the *Jewish* Ritual;) “ there-
 “ fore the Apostle calls the Christian Religion
 “ *Grace*, and the *Jewish* he stiles *Works*.” —
 Or, as this opinion may be more concisely ex-
 pressed in other words, the Terms *Faith* and
Law, *Grace* and *Works*, as they are used by
 St. *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, are to be
 taken for general names, or marks of distinc-
 tion, by which to characterize, in the most sig-
 nificant manner, the different natures of the
 two Institutions of Judaism and Christianity.

The obvious uses, to which this interpretation
 is capable of being applyed, were probably a-
 mong the chief reasons, that induced this able
 Writer first of all to adopt * it for his own.

For

* I say, *adopt*: for many Writers, before Dr. *Clarke*, have
 understood the terms *Law* and *Works* to refer to the Cere-
 monies of the Mosaic Institution; and others have in-
 terpreted

For what pretence can any one now have, upon the authority of *St. Paul* insisting that we are *Justified by Faith without Works*, to deny that Moral Duties are necessary to salvation; when, according to this exposition, the Apostle does not here speak of *the Faith of the Christian Religion, in opposition to the works of the Christian Religion; but of the Faith of the Gospel, in opposition to the external works of the Jewish Law?* † Or how can any one allege, that *Grace* is sufficient to ensure his acceptance with God, without any concomitant moral qualifications of his own, and bring *St. Paul* for his Voucher, asserting, that by *Grace we are saved*, and, *if by Grace, then is it no more of Works*; when the Apostle's meaning is, that in the Christian Religion men are entitled to the *gracious promises* of the Gospel, not on the foot of a perfect and exact compliance with the Ceremonies of the *Jewish Law*, but of a sincere, though imperfect, obedience to the *duties* of the Gospel? Or, lastly, with what face can the Infidel any longer object to us the contradiction that appears be-

interpreted the words *Faith* and *Grace*, in the same, or nearly the same, manner with this learned Writer. But He seems to be the first, who undertook to prove, that these Expressions, throughout the *whole* Epistles of *St. Paul* to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, are *always* used to denote the Religions of *Moses* and *Jesus*.

† See *Clarke's* Sermon.

tween St. *Paul* and St. *James*, the former of whom expressly concludes, that *A man is justified by Faith without Works*, the latter as expressly affirms, that *By Works a Man is Justified, and not by Faith only*;† when, supposing this explication to be true, the meaning of the one is, that the Faith of the Christian Religion is sufficient to justify a man, without observing the ritual part of the *Jewish* Religion; and the meaning of the other, that the mere profession of Belief in Christ will by no means be sufficient finally to save him, without an uniform and regular obedience to the Commands of Christ? — But, notwithstanding the superior advantages which may seem to recommend this opinion beyond that of former Interpreters; it is much to be feared, that, when we come to apply it to particular passages in this Epistle, it will be seen to rest on no firm and solid foundation; on the contrary, we shall, if I mistake not, find it to be ill-grounded, and inconclusive; and that the very error, which this excellent Writer had been so sedulous in cautioning his own Readers against, viz. that of “ picking out single
“ Texts of Scripture and interpreting them
“ without considering the coherence and con-
“ nexion of the whole discourse,” he has on this occasion fallen into himself.

St.

† *James* ii. 24.

St. Paul, in the words of the Text, asserts as follows, *Therefore we conclude, that a Man is Justified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law.* His Meaning, we are told, † is this: “ It clearly appears, from what he had already argued, that obedience to the Christian Religion, elsewhere called the obedience of Faith, is sufficient to justify a man, without observing the Ceremonies of the Jewish Law.” Before we can properly enquire, whether this be *indeed* the meaning of the Text, it is necessary, that we attend a little to the Apostle’s argument in this place. — His main point, in the first part of the Epistle, is to prove, that the *Gentiles* had an equal right to be admitted into the Kingdom of God under the Messiah with the *Jews*.* But the *Jew* obstinately opposed this: And some address was necessary, to make him own the reasonableness and equity of such a procedure. The Apostle sets about it with infinite art and delicacy. He begins, (chapter the first,) with displaying the terrible state of Religion and Morals among the *Gentiles*. This the *Jew* readily allowed; and, by allowing, became properly prepared for the application, the Apostle makes, in the next chap-

† See Clarke’s Sermon.

* See Mr. Locke’s *Synopsis* to the Epistle to the Romans.

ter, of this Example to himself. He could not but condemn the wretched condition of the *Gentile*; but he was not aware, that in thus *judging another*, at the same time he was *condemning himself*; for *he that judged DID the same things*: and therefore, if the *Gentile* was to be excluded from becoming a Member of the church of God, on account of his wicked Works, the *Jew* must also be deprived of his Privilege of continuing any longer in it, for the same Reason. Both therefore being equally deficient in the article of *Works*, they were both obliged to have recourse to *Grace* or *Favour*, in order to their being justified before God: And since the same *method* of Justification was necessary to both, it followed, that the *Gentiles* had as good a Right, if either of them could be said to have any Right at all, to be made partakers of that high Privilege, as the *Jews* themselves.—This is, in short, the sum of the Apostle's argument, as it lies in the three first chapters of his Epistle to the *Romans*. The only thing that can admit of dispute is, What *Works of the Law* St. Paul means, when he says that by them no man shall be justified. Now this can only be learned by considering, what it is which the Apostle predicates concerning these works. In the Text, he asserts, that A

MAN *may be justified by Faith* WITHOUT THEM; and in the 20th verse of this chapter, that BY THEM *there shall* NO FLESH *be justified in the sight of God*. Now, from the general expressions in both these places of MAN, and NO FLESH, 'tis plain, that the argument must be construed to extend to every part of mankind, *i. e.* to the *Gentile* as well as to the *Jew*; for into those two parts the Apostle all along supposes the world to be divided. Therefore the Works, which are here excluded from having any share in men's Justification, must be *such* Works, as both *Jew* and *Gentile* were defective in: But the Works, in which the *Gentile* was deficient, not only could not possibly be *Ceremonial Works*, (with which he *could* have no concern *before* his being a Christian, whatever was determined about the necessity of his conformity to them, *after* his becoming such,) but moreover, are expressly said to be the Works of Righteousness, or, as St. Paul phrases it, the *Works of the Law written in his heart* †. Consequently, the works in which the *Jew* was defective, were also the works of the same Law; that is, they were the works of Morality, and not, as was asserted, the ritual observances of his own Religion. — Nor can it be pretended, that St. Paul here uses the word *Works* in two

† Rom. ii. 15.

different Senses; as if by Works, when applied to the *Gentile*, we were to understand the moral Duties of Natural Religion, and, when applied to the *Jew*, the Rites of the *Mosaic* Law. For the Apostle has industriously provided against our falling into such a mistake, from the *proof* he brings, (in the second and third chapters,) that the *Jew* was equally culpable in the affair of *merit* before God, as the *Gentile*, whom he affected so much to despise. In the first chapter he had proved the miserable state of *Gentile* Morals, from a long induction of particulars, too black and dismal to be either defended or excused: He then proceeds to do the same with respect to the *Jews*, not only from an oblique comparison which he runs between them and the *Gentiles* in the second chapter, but also more directly in the third chapter, from an express testimony out of the book of *Psalms*;* which, being written to those who *were under the Law*, must

* The Passage, to which St. Paul here refers, occurs in *Psalms* xiv. And the particulars in which the whole body of the *Jews* is there said to be guilty, are these; *They were ALL gone out of the way; there was NONE that DID GOOD, NO NOT ONE; with their tongues they had used DECEIT; their mouth was full of CURSING and BITTERNESS; their feet were swift to SHED BLOOD; and, in a word, THERE WAS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.* Is it possible that St. Paul could so much as *think* of the Ceremonial Law, when he charged the *Jews* with offending in the articles here mentioned?

of necessity relate to the *Jews*, to whom that Law was given, and which here, in the clearest terms, pronounces ALL of them to be SINNERS: *To the end*, as St. Paul observes, *that the mouth of EVERY ONE*, that would attempt to justify himself by virtue of his own obedience, *might be stopped*, and ALL THE WORLD, Jew as well as Gentile, *might become guilty before God.*† — On the whole therefore, we conclude from the words of the Text, as explained and illustrated from the parallel passage in the 20th verse, that the *Works* and the *Law* there mentioned, have no particular reference to the Ceremonies of the *Jewish Re-*

† I will take leave to subjoin here two Authorities of Mr. Locke and Dr. Whitby, which will serve not a little to illustrate and confirm the Opinion I am endeavouring to establish. The former of these, in his Note on *Rom. iii. 20.* has the following words. “ Εἰς ἁγὰς νόμῳ, I should render “ *by Deeds of Law*; i. e. by Actions of Conformity to a Law “ requiring the Performance of the δικαιώματα Θεοῦ, *the Right* “ *Rule of God*, (mentioned i. 32.) with a Penalty annexed, “ no Flesh can be justified: But every one failing of an exact Conformity of his Actions, to the immutable Rectitude of that eternal Rule of Right, will be found unrighteous, and so incur the Penalty of the Law. That this is “ the meaning of ἁγὰς νόμῳ, is evident, because the Apostle’s “ declaration here is concerning *all men*, πᾶσι ἄνθρωποις. But “ we know *the Heathen world were not under the Law of Moses.*”

“ Evident it is (saith the judicious Whitby, in his Preface to the Epistle to the *Galatians*,) that the *Antithesis* runs “ all along, not between *Ceremonial* and *Moral Works*, or “ between Works done by the Law of *Moses* or by the “ Tenor of the Law of *Nature*; but between Works in general, and Faith; the *Law of Works*, and the *Law of Faith.*”

ligion:

ligion : And that the Apostle's Doctrine is, that a Man may be *Justified before God*, (whatever be the meaning of that phrase,) I do not say with some, *without his fulfilling*, but without his *having fulfilled* the moral duties of natural Reason and Religion. *

If

* The common opinion is, that St. *Paul*, at the time of writing his Epistles, especially those to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, had three different sorts of Adversaries to contend with ; each of whom was furnished with objections, suited to the particular character he professed to bear. These were *Gentiles*, *Jews*, and *Judaizing Christians*. The *first*, being already no strangers to the great principles of Natural Religion, on which Christianity was seen and was allowed to stand, denied the use and necessity of all Revelation in general, whether *Jewish* or *Christian*. The *Jews* were as much bigotted to the Law of *Moses*, as the *Gentiles* were to that of Nature ; and insisted, that obedience to this Law was alone sufficient to procure them favour with God. The Apostle, in answer, tells them, that although both had indeed, from the lights of reason and religion, been taught well enough before, they had neither of them, in fact, been able to *practise* accordingly, or to live up to the obedience, which they saw and owned to be their duty : and therefore, by the Law of *Works* neither being qualified to look up to God for pardon and acceptance, some further Dispensation was necessary, which should put men under a milder Covenant of *Grace* ; and not only ensure to them a full and free pardon for *the sins that were past*, (Rom. iii. 25.) but also leave room for repentance in those particulars, in which they should happen to fail for the future. The third and last sett of Adversaries were, as we have said, the *Judaizing Christians* ; and their error consisted in this, that the Law of *Moses* was still obligatory, and that not only themselves, but the *Gentiles* also, were of necessity to submit to it. And against these the Apostle observes, that the Law of *Moses* was never once intended by God to bind the *Gentiles* ; nor even the *Jews* any longer than the coming of Christ, who was the Antitype and the Substance of that Law. — From this

If we attend to the Apostle's argument, as it is continued through the 4th chapter, we shall find, that our Author has not been more successful in his exposition of the Term *Faith*, than we have just seen him to be in that of *Works* and *the Law*. The Apostle having thus excluded all pretences of boasting from the *Jews*, on account of their having formerly been honoured by the Almighty above other nations, in being entrusted with the sacred deposit of the revelation of his Will by *Moses* and the Prophets; proceeds to confirm still further the right the *Gentiles* had of partaking in the benefits of God's peculiar people equally with themselves, from the example of *Abraham*. His way of putting the case is this: *Abraham* was the common father of the *Jewish* nation, and from him they confessedly derived their title to all those privileges, which, as a nation, they enjoyed. By the same way therefore, in which *Abraham* was justifi-

this general view of the principles which were then held by the enemies of Christianity, and the Apostle's manner of opposing them, we may not unfairly infer, that, although we allow St. *Paul*, when speaking to the last of these three parties, the *Judaizing Christians*, to mean by *Works* and the *Law*, nothing more than the Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Ritual, yet still this sense will take in but a third part of the design of his Epistles; for, when addressing himself to the other two, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, he could mean nothing else by *Works* but those *moral works* of Righteousness, in fulfilling which both parties were deficient, before their embracing of Christianity.

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ed, by the same must his posterity also be justified before God. Now *Abraham*, at the time of his first being called out of his own country unto a land that God would shew him, † was, as *St. Paul* plainly hints in the fifth verse, like the rest of his Family, an *Idolater*; * and, as such, could not then be possessed of any qualities, which might entitle him to so singular a favour, by way of *debt* or *reward*; but must, agreeably to what the old Scriptures also affirmed, have been justified by *Faith*; i. e. by his reliance on that promise which God had made to him, that his Seed should possess the land of *Canaan*, and that in him should *All the Families of the Earth be blessed*. *Abraham* therefore being first of all taken into Covenant with God, not on account of *Works*, (in which respect he had nothing *whereof to glory*,) but through the mere *Grace* and *Mercy* of God, accepted on his part through *Faith*; through *Faith* must all the descendants of *Abraham*

† *Gen. xii. 1.*

* *St. Paul's* words are, *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth* THE UNGODLY. — τοῦ ἀσεβῆ, him being ungodly. “By these words (as *Mr. Locke* observes) *St. Paul* plainly points out *Abraham*, who was ἀσεβής, ungodly, i. e. “a *Gentile*, not a Worshipper of the true God, when God “called him.” And, in his note on *Rom. i. 18.* he remarks, that “the words ἀσεβής and ἀσεβεία are appropriated, in other “parts of the Epistle, to signify the *Atheism*, *Polytheism*, and “*Idolatry* of the Heathen World.” We may add, that ἀσεβής properly imports one, who did not pay due Reverence and Worship to God.

likewise

likewise partake of the same Covenant; and amongst these descendants, *Gentiles* and *Jews* were alike included. — Or thus: The *Jews* pretended an exclusive right to be the people of God, by virtue of their lineal descent from *Abraham*: The Apostle tells them, that the *Gentiles* were as truly the sons of that father of the faithful as themselves. The *Jews* objected to the Apostle's doctrine of Justification by Faith: St. *Paul* in answer shews them, it was Faith that justified *Abraham*, not only long before their Law was ever given, but even before God had entered into a formal Covenant to make the descendants of that Patriarch his peculiar people, by instituting the rite of Circumcision. — Now, as all this happened before the national adoption of the *Jews* took place, and in the very infancy of the divine Revelations to *Abraham*; the Faith here said to be *imputed to him for Righteousness*,† could not well be a Faith in God's purpose to redeem mankind by his Son, with which at this time he appears not to have been at all acquainted: and therefore *it should seem*, that

† *Rom.* iv. 22. See also verses 18, 19, 20, 21. from whence it appears, that the Faith of *Abraham*, here so highly extolled, consisted in nothing more than this; namely, his not *staggering at the promise of God*, that he would make him a *Father of many nations*, although his own and his wife's ages, according to the natural course of things, made such an event of all others the most unlikely to come to pass.

St. Paul, by *Faith* in this chapter, cannot consistently be understood to mean the *Christian Religion* as contra-distinguished from the *Jewish*, but rather Faith in the general, or a trust and confidence in the divine promises, under whatever dispensation they were given, or under whatever circumstances revealed.

There are two passages in the seventh chapter, which deserve to be mentioned on this occasion, because, of all others, they seem most to favour the sense contended for by our Author. In the sixth verse, St. Paul tells the *Romans*, that *Now they were delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein they were held*; and, in the fourth verse, that *they were dead to the Law by the body of Christ*. And so far it must be allowed, that *Law* here most certainly stands for the *Law of Moses*, as appears from the manner of St. Paul's introducing the subject in the first verse, where he professes to *speak to them who knew the Law*. But then to restrain the meaning of the word to *the Ceremonial Law* only, is at least to entertain but a partial and imperfect conception of the Idea intended to be represented by it. * — The A-

* In the 7th verse of this chapter, the Apostle asserts, that *By the Law is the knowledge of Sin*. "Now this knowledge of Sin, as *Whitby* observes, being chiefly produced by the *Moral Law*, shews the Apostle excludes as well that, as the *Ceremonial Law*, from Justification." Pref. to *Galat*.

postle's design, in this and the following chapter, is to shew the superior excellence of the Christian Religion to the Religions both of Nature and of *Moses*; inasmuch as neither of them could conquer and subdue the prevalence of bad habits; or atone for the various guilt contracted by them.* The *Gentile* was condemned by his own conscience for not obeying the Law of Reason, written on his heart: And the *Jew* could not expect salvation by virtue of his obedience to that Revealed Religion, which made no allowance for human frailty, and condemned every one, who continued not in ALL things which were written in the book of the Law to do them.† Both there-

* That this is a true account of the design of the Apostle in this place, shall be proved from an Authority greater than all exception. "In the latter part of the 7th chapter St. Paul describes the State of an unregenerate *Jew* or *Heathen*; for what he says equally belongs to both. This he does in order to shew them the Necessity of Redemption through Christ, inasmuch as neither the Law of *Moses*, nor of Nature, could free them from the power and dominion of Sin, nor consequently from Death, which ever follows close at the Heels of Sin. That this was the Apostle's intent, appears from the Lamentation he makes over the State of Nature, and the Remedy he immediately proposes of Faith through Christ, ver. 24, 25. And then in the 8th chapter, he sets forth the Power of Redemption, shewing, in every part, how it supplies the Weaknesses and Infirmities both of the Law and of Nature. Compare vii. 23. with vii. 2. and vii. 18. with viii. 9. So that the Apostle's main Design here is, I think, pretty evident." Bp. *Sherlock's* Sermons, Vol. I. pag. 239.

† *Gal.* iii. 10.

fore must of necessity lay hold on the merciful conditions of the Gospel, which admirably supplied the deficiencies both of the Law of *Moses* and of *Nature*: To the *Gentile* it administered the most powerful assistances against the dominion of those Lusts and Appetites, which had formerly led him captive at their will: and by it the *Jew* might be *justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses*.† — From this state of the Apostle's method of arguing, one would be apt to imagine, that in his Idea of *Law*, he comprehended the Religion of *Nature* as well as that of *the Jews*; and that even, when the word is particularly to be limited to the *Jewish* Religion, we are to understand it as taking in the *whole* of that Dispensation, in its several branches, Political, Ceremonial, and Moral.

Having thus seen the inconclusiveness of this Writer's account of the meaning of the Words *Faith*, *Works*, and *the Law*; we may now proceed to consider his interpretation of *Grace*: And, after what has been already said, a single instance, I suppose, will be sufficient to shew, that this is equally groundless as the others. — In the 10th and 11th chapters, the

† *Acts* xiii. 39.

Apostle, after a long vindication of the Justice of Divine Providence in rejecting the unbelieving *Jews* from being any longer his peculiar people, and taking in the *Gentiles* in their stead; proceeds to observe,* that, As in the time of that general defection of *Israel* to Idolatry, which happened in the days of *Elias*, there were yet left seven thousand men, who had never bowed the knee to *Baal*; *Even so*, at that present time also, there was a remnant, who had been willing to embrace the Gospel, according to the election of GRACE: Now if it be by GRACE, (says the Apostle,) then is it no more of WORKS: i. e. if the Reason why this remnant of the *Israelites* was continued in the Kingdom of God, was because they accepted the offers of the Gospel, on the foot of mere Grace and Favour, through the mercy of God not imputing Sin to them, then it could not be owing to their former observance of the *Mosaic* Religion: Otherwise, adds the Apostle, Grace would be no more Grace; i. e. if they were accepted on the foot of Obedience, such acceptance they would have had a strict Right and Title to, and might have claimed as a Debt; and Grace would no longer be, what its name imports, a free and undeserved favour.— On

* Rom. xi. 4, 5, 6.

this

this passage we may observe, *First*, that as the Apostle's argument here relates only to the *Jews*, and has no concern at all with the *Gentiles*; *Works* must here mean only the Works of the *Jewish* Religion; though not barely ceremonial works, but ceremonial and moral. *Secondly*, that by *Grace* is to be understood any favour, which is conferred not by way of Debt, but of Gift, at the free pleasure and good-will of the Giver. The favour or Grace *here* conferred was the being taken into the Church and Covenant of God under the Gospel: And therefore, *Thirdly*, to say that Grace stands *for* the Gospel, or for the *Christian Religion*, seems to be something like taking the Means for the End. *

* In the same way must the parallel passage in the Epistle to the *Ephesians* (ii. 8, 9.) be interpreted; where St. Paul, writing to those who had been *Gentiles in the flesh*, dead in *trespasses and sins*, and *aliens from the common-wealth of Israel*, tells them, that by *Grace* they were *saved, through Faith*; and that not of themselves; it was the gift of God: not of *Works*, lest any man should boast. Only we may observe by the way, that, as the Apostle is expressly speaking of those who in time passed were *Heathens*, and not *Jews*, the *Works* here mentioned, must, (contrary to what was the case in the example above,) be understood particularly to relate to the duties of Natural Religion, with which alone the *Gentile* could be concerned; although, in the general expression, lest ANY MAN should boast, we may not improbably suppose him to have had his eye upon the vain and arrogant pretences of the *Jew*, notwithstanding the argument was more immediately directed to the state of the unconverted *Gentile*.

To

To conclude: From the several passages in this Epistle that have been here produced and examined, it may now perhaps appear, That the Interpretation of the Learned Writer referred to above, is not sufficient for the purposes which he intended it should answer: That the terms *Faith* and *Grace*, *Works* and *Law*, as opposed to each other by *St. Paul*, cannot, consistently with the connexion of his discourse, be understood as always to stand for General Names, by which to express the *Jewish* and *Christian* Religions: That the two last must frequently be taken to comprehend the Works of *Natural Religion* and of *Morality*, as well as the *Ceremonial* Observances of the *Jewish Law*; and that the two former, though in some few places they may perhaps be confined and limited to express the *Christian Religion*, do yet usually bear a larger and more general sense; the one meaning any gift or favour that is gratuitously conferred, the other a firm and well-grounded trust in the divine promises under any Dispensation, whether Patriarchal, Mosaic or Christian: And therefore, which is the main Inference I intend should be drawn from the whole, That it is necessary to look out for, if haply we may find, some better way, to remove the difficulty

culty contained in the text, and so make Scripture appear to be,* *as it is in truth, the Word of God*, WHICH WORKETH EFFECTUALLY IN THEM THAT BELIEVE.

* 1 *Thess.* ii. 13.

DIS-

DISCOURSE II.

ROMANS III. 28.

Therefore we conclude, that a Man is Justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.

THE professed design of the Gospel being to instruct mankind in the conditions, on compliance with which they might obtain admission into the Kingdom or Church of God here, and secure to themselves final acceptance and salvation hereafter; nothing, one would imagine, ought to be more clearly laid down than these; and here, if ever, we might expect to find the vision of the Prophet verified, that the Terms, on which our title to Life and Immortality depend, should be described in such plain and legible characters, that he *may run who readeth them*. * Whence then, it may be asked, have arisen so many endless quarrels and disputes concern-

* *Habak. ii. 2.*

ing them? Was God unable or unwilling to free his Law from doubts and difficulties, which are always esteemed, and justly, to be but blots and blemishes in Human Institutes, but which reflect still greater dishonour on those that are Divine? The very end and design of Revelation was to instruct mankind in those articles of Faith and Practice, which they either were not at all, or at least were not so well, instructed in before. But how is this end answered, if the Revelation itself is so obscure, as not to be understood by any but Scholars, and hardly to be understood by them? Why were not all the parts of the Gospel, those especially which concern our own most important interests, delivered in a manner so plain and intelligible, as that it should be impossible for men to mistake or to pervert their meaning? Or to what purpose has God given us his *Word to be a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*,* if it burns so dimly and unsteadily, as to be of no real service in directing us in the road to Happiness and Immortality?

The examination of this Question will not only be a means of freeing the Scriptures from the charge here brought against them, but also let us into a clear view of those accidental

* *Psalms* cxix. 105.

causes, that have contributed to darken and obscure one of the plainest articles of Revelation.

First then, with respect to the truth of this formidable objection, we flatly, and in so many words, deny, that there is any such difficulty as is here pretended. This, as being merely matter of Fact, will admit of no other proof, than that, of which a Fact is capable. To the Scriptures then let us go, and judge for ourselves, whether the Terms of our Salvation are indeed described in that confusion and perplexity which is here complained of. When *John* the Baptist appeared, as the Harbinger and Fore-runner of the Son of God, the *warning voice* he uttered to mankind was this, REPENT YE, *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* † Here we see, that *Repentance* is made the *first* necessary condition, on which men were to be admitted to the privileges of the Gospel; and we may suppose, that it implied, not only that the minds of men should be purged from vitious excesses of every kind, but freed also from the dominion of any Passion or Prejudice, which might indispose them to attend to the truth, then ready to be revealed. To this, our Lord himself added a *second*, namely, that of *Faith* or *Belief* in him,

† *Matth.* iii. 2.

as that Prophet who should come into the world. This was a condition, which could not but be expected and demanded by the founder of a new Religion; who, having once established his claim to be a messenger sent from God, by fulfilling Prophecies and working Miracles, could not be supposed to offer the benefits, of which he assumed to himself the disposal, to any but those who owned his commission, and professed to believe in his Name. This was expressed in the following words of our blessed Master, the first he uttered, on his entering upon his public ministry, to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*: *The time, says he, is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; REPENT YE, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.** What the Baptist, and our Lord together, made the two conditions of obtaining a right to the benefits of this new Covenant of peace and pardon, we shall find, by consulting their history as laid before us in the *Acts*, his Apostles also to have always insisted on to their new Converts: REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED *every one of you* IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST *for the remission of sins,*† was their constant language both to *Jews and Gentiles*. And St. Paul's own account of this matter may well enough be substituted

* *Mark* i. 15.† *Acts* ii. 38.

for that of all the Apostles, when, speaking to the *Jews*, he says, *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED from all things, from which ye could not be Justified by the Law of Moses.**

From hence it appears, that, with regard to all the particulars of Faith and Practice, that is, all such particulars as relate to ourselves, the Gospel is altogether free from the obscurity objected to it. And would plain men be content to learn their duty from those parts of Scripture which they do understand, and not puzzle and perplex themselves about others which they do not, and which it is not expected of them that they should understand; we should cease to hear so many complaints of the confusion and inconsistency, in which the terms and conditions of our Salvation are said to be involved. These Terms we have just seen to be FAITH and REPENTANCE; or, in other words, a profession of Belief in Jesus as the *Messiah* foretold; and, in consequence of such profession, Repentance from dead works to serve the living God. In ascertaining these terms, our Saviour and his Apostles invariably agree; in understanding

* *Acts* xiii. 38, 39.

them there is not the least difficulty; nor can there be any dispute concerning them, but such as arises from *other* causes, besides those which affect the Gospel.

But still, it is not to be dissembled, that this Subject has always been looked upon as attended with great obscurity: and a little enquiry into the state of an early controversy that happened in the Church, about the necessity of conforming to the *Jewish* Law, will let us into the true causes, from whence this obscurity arose. The Saviour of the world, although, in order to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers,* he was pleased to confine his own ministry to the house of *Israel*, commissioned his Disciples, to *Go and Teach All Nations*, and to publish the blessings of his Kingdom to *Every Creature under heaven*.† On this authority they went forth, preaching both to *Jew and Gentile* the glad tidings of salvation; (*the Lord confirming the word with signs following*;‡) and declared to all, who repented and embraced the Gospel, that they were admitted into a state of pardon and reconciliation with God. It was natural enough for the *Jew*, who had always been taught to look upon Himself as the only favourite of heaven, and had been ac-

* See *Rom.* xv. 8. *Matth.* xv. 24. † *Matth.* xxviii. 19. *Mark* xvi. 15. *Col.* i. 23. ‡ *Mark* xvi. 20.

customed to regard every nation besides his own as altogether unworthy of the divine notice and protection, to be at first not a little disgusted at seeing the *Gentiles* entitled to the same privileges, through the mere profession of Faith and Repentance, which himself had all along possessed, and which he was persuaded no one else could possess, upon any other tenure, than a painful observance of the *Mosaic Law*. However, as it could not be denied, that God, in the distribution of those miraculous powers, which were imparted to the first Christians, had *put no difference* between the *Jews* and others, but had *given* indiscriminately, to every one who Believed, *the like gift* of the Holy Ghost; the better part, we are told, *held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.** But it is knowing little of human perversity to imagine, that inveterate and deep-rooted prejudices are entirely to be removed at once. And thus it happened with great numbers of the *Jews*; who, notwithstanding the good examples of some of their more sober countrymen, still continued firmly rivetted in their old opinion, that the Religion of *Moses*, as derived immediately from the fountain of Truth and Perfection, was, and

* *Acts* xi. 17, 18.

could

could not but be, of eternal obligation : and though they allowed the possibility of a *Gentile's* becoming an object of divine mercy, by professing himself a *Jew*, and submitting to the observances of their Law^{*}; yet they rigorously insisted, that this was the only mean by which he could partake of such a privilege ; and that to pretend to point out any other, or to exchange this for a new and more perfect revelation of God's will, was nothing less than an impious attempt to destroy that Oeconomy, which the Lord had fashioned, and not man. Some indeed, more moderate than the rest, and convinced perhaps by those wonderful attestations which were daily given to the truth of the Gospel, were willing to secure to themselves the advantages of both Dispensations, by a specious proposal which they made of joining them together. But such a composition as this but ill suiting the great change, which Providence was at this time effecting in the church, and being on that account absolutely rejected by the Apostles ; *no small dissension and disputation*,* we are informed, arose between the several parties : And in this state of things, and on this occasion it was, that St. Paul, who was particularly *separated to be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles*,† first

* *Acts* xv. 2. † *Rom.* i. 1. xv. 16.

took up the thought of entering into this controversy himself; in order to vindicate the liberty of his *Heathen* converts, and to maintain, (which is the one great aim pursued throughout the whole Epistle to the *Romans*,) that they now had an equal title to all the benefits and advantages of God's peculiar people, through Faith in the *Messiah*, as the *Jews* had formerly, by virtue of their obedience to the *Mosaic* Law. Accordingly he did so; and with what success, we the *Gentile* Church shall always declare with gratitude.

Some of the chief arguments, which the Apostle makes use of in writing to the *Romans*, have been occasionally considered already. And it is not my intention, nor does it properly come within my design, to enter into a particular examination of them here. It is sufficient to observe, that for want of attending carefully to the principal end, which *St. Paul* proposed to himself in this Epistle, all the confusion and obscurity before mentioned took its rise.† Hence the complaints amongst Interpre-

† It is plain, from the most cursory view of *St. Paul's* Epistles, that the main end of them was, not so much to instruct those, to whom he writes, in the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity;—these he all along takes for granted they were well acquainted with before;—as to furnish them with proper answers to the different objections, which the enemies of the Gospel, under different pretences, had

preters concerning the great difficulty they are under, in ascertaining the true scope and purpose of the whole: hence their various and discordant methods of reconciling the conclusion in the Text with any tolerable propriety to the assertion of St. *James*, and indeed to that of St. *Paul* himself in others of his Epistles, and even in the concluding parts of this: And hence, lastly, the pernicious opinion of those, who hold that *Faith* alone is sufficient for salvation; and that to endeavour to *make it perfect by Works*, although according to the express command of an Apostle, is a presumptuous degradation of the free grace and merits of Christ; it is, in their own way of speaking, a relying upon ourselves and our own performances as far as they will go, and depending upon Christ only for the rest; a making a *partial* Saviour of him, who will either be a *whole* one, or none at all: with many other maxims of the like sort, all equally opposite to the whole tenor of the Gospel, and of which it is difficult to say, whether they contain less of common sense, or of common honesty.*

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brought against it. The same may be said of the rest of the Apostolical writings; namely, that they were all composed with particular views, and on particular occasions; either to guard the new Christians against the wiles of the enemy from *without*, or to correct the abuses that had crept among themselves from *within*.

* A noted teacher among the *Methodists*, speaking of himself and his lost estate, before God, in mercy to his poor soul,

It is the business of this discourse to rid this subject of a difficulty, which has so long afforded matter of offence to the sincere Christian and scorn to the Unbeliever; and to try, if we can, to make the Apostle consistent with himself, when, at some times, he asserts that *they which Believe* are indispensably obliged to *maintain good Works*;† and at others, that *a man may be justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the Law*.

soul, was pleased to remove the *Scales from his Eyes*, by something that *seemed indeed like a voice from heaven*, has the following passage; which, as it contains something curious, and may not unfairly be looked upon as a specimen of their usual way of *preaching up Christ*, (as they phrase it,) I will venture to lay before the reader. “To use a homely Similitude, I put the Justice of God into one Scale, and as many good Works of my own as I could into the other, and when I found, as I always did, my own good Works not to be a Ballance to the Divine Justice, I then threw in Christ as a Make-weight. And this every one really does who hopes for Salvation, partly by doing what he can for himself, and then relying on Christ for the rest. But, — Christ will either be a whole Saviour, or none at all. — Be you ever so sober, serious, just and devout, you are still under the Curse of God, as I was, and know it not, provided you have any allowed Reliance on your own Works, and think they are to do something for you, and Christ to do the rest.” *Fragment of the true Religion*, pag. 9. But for a full confutation of the principles contained in this precious fragment, I must beg leave to refer to a late Pamphlet, called *The Principles and Practices of the Methodists considered, in some Letters to the Leaders of that Sect*: where the folly and presumption of these Spiritual Doctors are properly exposed in the happiest mixture of Wit and Argument, and where the reader may be sure of meeting with no less Instruction than Entertainment.

† *Titus* iii. 8.

But before we can proceed in our enquiry, it will be necessary to settle, with some degree of exactness, what is the determinate meaning of the words in the Text; which have been not a little perverted and obscured by the fanciful expositions of certain systematical Interpreters.

By way of reconciling the doctrine of the Text to that of other passages in St. *Paul's* Epistles, two Expedients have been proposed by them, and both with the same success. One was, by supposing the Apostle to mean by *Works* nothing more than the *Ceremonies of the Jewish Law*; which, on examination, has been shewn to be without any sufficient support from Scripture. The other, (which is by far the better of the two,) was, by giving a new and more extensive signification to the word *Faith*; and understanding by it, not only a *speculative* assent to the doctrines of the Gospel, but also the whole of *practical* Christianity, or all those good dispositions and affections, which naturally spring from a rational and well-grounded belief. But neither will this Expedient, any more than the other, solve the objection which it is intended to remove. For *first*, the nature of the Apostle's argument in this place directly opposes such an interpretation. He had been labouring to prove,
that

that a man might be justified by faith, without having formerly fulfilled the moral works of the Law : but, supposing that under our idea of Gospel-faith works of righteousness are to be comprehended, the argument of *St. Paul* is reduced to a mere quibble ; and means no more than this, that Justification may indeed be obtained by faith alone, without works, because in the very notion of faith, works are included. *Secondly*, from the nature of the thing it appears, that such an exposition must be wholly groundless. For we read in Scripture, that many persons, after only once hearing the Apostles, were converted and baptized on the same day.* At their baptism indeed they engaged for the future to forsake sin, which was all their present circumstances put it in their power to do ; but surely obedience, and the promise of obedience are two things.† *Lastly*, the express testi-

* See *Acts* ii. 41. where no less than *three thousand souls* are said to have believed, on the preaching of *St. Peter* ; and to have been baptized *the same day*.

† “ The Scripture is express and frequent in this assertion, “ That Believers are *Justified by Faith* ; in which expression “ either Faith must include Works, or Evangelical obedience, or it doth not ; if it doth not, we must be justified by “ Faith alone. And that it doth not formally include Works “ of Evangelical Righteousness, appears from the plain distinction which the Scripture puts between them ; when “ it informs us, that *Faith works by love ; acts with our “ works, and is made perfect by them* ; when it calls upon us “ to *shew forth our faith by our works* ; and when it speaks “ of the *work of faith, and the obedience of faith*.” *Whitby's* Preface to the Epistle to the Galatians.

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mony of Scripture is clearly against this notion. From the history of the *Acts* it appears, that the method of the Apostles in preaching the Gospel to Unbelievers was this: They laid before them the darkness and ignorance of their *Heathen* state; and the exceeding great love of God, who now freely offered to them a deliverance from that state: They declared to them the chief articles of the Christian Doctrine, at the same time pointing out the proper arguments by which these were capable of being proved: And whoever declared his assent to these, and, in consequence of such assent, promised to conduct his future life accordingly, him, without further ceremony, they baptized, and absolved from the guilt of all past transgressions: in the language of St. *Paul*, he was *justified*; he was made a member of the church and kingdom of God here, and was put into a capacity of becoming, through his own endeavours and the merits of his Saviour, eternally happy in another world hereafter. † And indeed, on any other supposition, how is it, that many, who in Scripture are said to *believe* and to have been *baptized*,
are

† Thus we read that when *Philip* had preached *Jesus* to the Eunuch, and was asked by him, *what hindered him to be baptized*; the only thing required by the Apostle was this, *If thou Believest* (says he) *with all thine heart, thou mayest*. Upon which

are yet described to be *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity?* † Of what but such a dead and ineffectual Faith as this does St. James treat of, in the second chapter of his Epistle? Or whence the exhortations to *continue grounded and settled in the Faith, to build up ourselves in our most holy Faith,* and the like; unless we admit the distinction between Faith considered as a *Profession*, (in which sense it is common to all, who, by virtue of such profession, are made members of Christ's spiritual body, the church,) and Faith considered as a *Principle*, (in which sense it is peculiar to those only, who in Scripture are said to *continue in Christ's word*, and so to become his *disciples indeed?*) ‡

Both these methods therefore of explaining the Text, by affixing new senses to the words *Faith* and *Works*, proving insufficient; let us try whether we cannot succeed better by attempting to investigate what it is, which the Apostle means by *Justification*. And here, without the trouble of enquiring how the original word is used in other places either of

which, the Eunuch declaring, that he *Believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him. Acts viii. 35—38.*

† Compare *Acts viii. 13.* with *viii. 23.*

‡ *John viii. 31.*

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the Old or New Testament, I presume the main subject of this Epistle, as confessed by all, is sufficient of itself to let us into the true and genuine meaning, which this Phrase is intended to express. Allowing then, that the principal design of *St. Paul* in writing to the *Romans*, was to prove, that the *Gentiles* had as good a right, through divine Grace and Mercy, to the benefits of God's Kingdom and People, as the *Jews*; and that, according to the terms and conditions of the Gospel-covenant, all mankind might be assured of that pardon for past transgressions, which they had never been able with certainty to procure from any preceding dispensation, whether of Nature or of *Moses*: I shall now endeavour to shew, that the *Justification* so often mentioned by *St. Paul*, and which in the Text is said to be by *Faith* and *without works*, has not the least reference or respect to that compleat and final justification, which we are told sincere Christians will receive at the day of Judgment; but is indeed nothing more than that free pardon and acquittal from all former offences, which was granted to every one at his baptism, when he was first instated in the privileges and honours of Christianity: and consequently, that the proposition of the Text, when rightly expounded, amounts only to this; That through
faith

faith in Jesus Christ, every man may become entitled to the benefits and advantages of the Gospel, although, before his conversion, he had never acted up to those rules and precepts of morality, which his reason and conscience had always owned and approved to be his duty.*

In order to this, let the following account, as collected from Scripture, be fairly considered. The *Jewish* Oeconomy having now run out its destined course, and the time, long purposed in the divine counsels, being fully come, in which *the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise of God in Christ by the Gospel*;† the Apostles and Ministers of our Lord, according

* It appears from an ample number of texts, collected with great care and judgment in *Taylor's Key to the Apostolick writings*, that the terms *Justify* and *Justification* are employed in Scripture to express *any* instance of Mercy and Deliverance, whether temporal or spiritual, that is effected, not by our own merits, but by the kindness and favour of God: and accordingly are, with the utmost propriety, applied by St. *Paul*, to that great and signal instance of divine Love, by which we are delivered out of Heathenish Darkness into Gospel-light, and *turned from the power of Satan unto God*. "Thus *Rahab* was justified, when she escaped the common carnage of *Jericho*: *Noah* was justified, when saved from the Deluge: *David* was justified, when delivered from his Enemies: *Phinehas*, when he had the Honour of perpetual Priesthood entailed upon his family: and *Abraham* was justified, when his Idolatry was pardoned, and he and his Posterity were taken into God's peculiar Covenant." Chap. xvi. of the *Key*, &c.

† *Eph.* iii. 6.

to the commission they had received from him, began openly to proclaim to all the gracious offers of pardon and salvation, and *to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.** At this time, not only sacred but prophane history informs us, the Heathen world was altogether sunk into the lowest and most abandoned state of vice and uncleanness: *alienated* (agreeably to the description of our inspired oracles) *from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them; and walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable Idolatries.†* A situation so miserable and forlorn as this could not possibly give them any claim upon God's JUSTICE, to confer upon them a privilege so invaluable as that of being *translated into the kingdom of his dear Son;‡* and hence it is, that we find it always ascribed in Scripture to his GRACE and MERCY; *who, for the great LOVE wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, quickened us together with Christ, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. ||* And to this prior state of unconverted Heathens, it should seem, all those expressions in the sacred writings, in which we are said to be *saved by Grace, and not of ourselves, or by our own works,* ought ultimately and solely to

* Eph. iii. 8. † Eph. iv. 18. 1 Pet. iv. 3. ‡ Coloss. i. 13.
|| Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.

be referred. Being thus admitted into the Christian state, *Gentiles* are henceforth said to be *born and begotten again*; * to be *purged from their old sins*, † and to be *reconciled unto God*; ‡ to be *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*; || to be *washed, renewed*, § and *sanctified*; ** and, in a word, JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, and at peace with God through our Lord *Jesus Christ*. †† These were doubtless great and inestimable advantages; and were so far from vacating their obligations to a life of holiness, that, on the contrary, they laid them under a still more forcible and closer tye, to observe the strictest purity of moral practice for the future. *The time past of their lives was to suffice them to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*; ‡‡ but now they were *no longer to live to themselves, but to him who died for them*: ||| they had indeed been *saved by Grace*, §§ but it became them to take care, that they *received not the Grace of God in vain*:^a they had been *called with an holy calling*;^b and now it depended upon their own *diligence to make that calling and election SURE*:^c they had been *Justified by Faith, without the works of the Law*;^d and now

* 1 Pet. i. 3, 23. † 2 Pet. i. 9. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 20.
 || Eph. ii. 19. § Tit. iii. 5. ** 1 Cor. i. 2. †† Rom. v. 1.
 ‡‡ 1 Pet. iv. 3. ||| 2 Cor. v. 15. §§ Eph. ii. 8. ^a 2 Cor. vi. 1.
^b 2 Tim. i. 9. ^c 2 Pet. i. 10. ^d Rom. iii. 28.

they were to *add to their Faith Virtue,*^a and by works to make faith perfect :^b they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; and if, after this, they were again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end would be worse with them than the beginning ; and it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.^c

That the account here given conveys to us the true and Scriptural notion of *Justifying Faith*, shall be confirmed by and by from several passages in Holy Scripture ; and may appear at present from the following considerations : that *Justification* is often joined by St. Paul with *Baptism*, as coincident with it, and an effect of it :^d that it is frequently used as an equivalent expression for *remission of sins* :^e that its virtue is expressly said to consist in procuring forgiveness of the *transgressions that are past*,^f but is never once affirmed to extend to those which shall be committed by professed Christians : and lastly, that the benefits of it are affirmed to belong to every

^a 2 Pet. i. 5. ^b James ii. 22. ^c 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. ^d Titus iii. 5, 7. 1 Cor. vi. 11. and Rom. vi. 3—12. ^e Rom. iii. 25, 26. v. 9, 10, 16, 18. ^f Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ix. 15. 2 Pet. i. 9.

one who is admitted into the *fellowship of the Gospel*,* even to those who, unless they repent, will finally be excluded from God's favour and presence in another world: All are *elect, chosen of God, and precious; all the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise; all justified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law.*†

There is something so exactly similar and striking in the Phrases made use of in the old Testament, to describe the external state and privileges of the *Jewish* church; that I will just, by way of conclusion, contrast them with each other, and leave what I have more to offer on this subject, to another discourse. Thus, as the *Jews* are said to have been first of all selected by God to be *a peculiar people unto himself above all the nations upon earth*,‡ NOT FOR THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, *or the uprightness of their hearts, but BECAUSE THE LORD LOVED THEM, and because he would keep the oath, which he had sworn unto their Fathers:* || so we Christians also are now received into the Communion of Saints, and, like the *Jews* of old, are become *a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a peculiar people*,§ NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH

* *Philipp.* i. 5.
Rom. iii. 28.
 § *1 Pet.* ii. 9.

† *1 Pet.* i. 2. *1 Pet.* ii. 4. *Gal.* iii. 29.
 ‡ *Deut.* xiv. 2. || *Deut.* ix. 5. vii. 8.

WE HAVE DONE, *but according to the MERCY AND LOVE OF GOD, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.** As all these honours and advantages were conferred upon the *Jews*, not that they might grow secure and careless of their duty, but that, in gratitude for such abundant goodness, they might *love the Lord their God, and keep his statutes and his commandments alway:†* so Christians are *sanctified, and redeemed with the precious blood of Christ,‡* not that they may continue in sin that grace may abound, but, that having such exceeding great and precious promises given them, they might by them be partakers of the Divine Nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. || And lastly, as the *Jews*, in case of their disobedience, were told, they should forfeit all their privileges and relations to God, and should be deprived of the honour of being any longer his Church and People: so wicked Christians are forewarned to expect *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*; and are threatened with being for ever excluded from their spiritual and heavenly *Canaan*, as the *Jews* were for their sins expelled from their temporal and earthly one. § The whole parallel is so very exact,

* Titus iii. 5. 6. † Deut. xi. 1. ‡ Jude i. 1 Pet. i. 19.
 || Rom. vi. 1. 2 Pet. i. 4. § Rom. ii. 8, 9. Heb. iv. 1, 11.

and

and the Analogy of God's dealings, with respect to his ancient and present church, is so much of a piece, as plainly to point out the necessity of pursuing the same method in explaining both, and to evince the usefulness and excellence of this interpretation,

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DISCOURSE III.

ROMANS III. 28.

Therefore we conclude, that a Man is Justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.

I Proceed now to confirm the Interpretation of the Text, as already given, from the following passages of holy Scripture.

St. Paul, in the five first chapters of this Epistle, is expressly contending for that Justification, which is by *Faith*, and not by *Works* or *the Deeds of the Law*: by which expressions, as we have seen, are meant not only Ceremonial Works, but all such works, whether Ceremonial or Moral, as might be supposed to entitle a man to the benefits of Justification by his own merits, and not by Faith alone. And yet, he afterwards speaks* concerning a state, wherein it is incumbent upon men to fulfil the works of Righteousness; *not to let*

* See chapters vi, vii, viii.

*sin reign in their mortal bodies, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, but to yield their members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.**

Now as things so contrary to each other cannot consistently be affirmed of one and the same person, in one and the same condition; it is plain they can only be reconciled, by supposing that in the five first chapters St. Paul is speaking of the state of Gentile-Christians *before* their conversion; and, in the sixth and two following chapters, of the state of such Christians *after* their conversion. In the one, *all had sinned, †* and therefore could have no right to the privileges of the Gospel-Covenant by way of debt or reward, but must be justified, if at all, *freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: ‡* In the other, they had been *buried with Christ by Baptism into Death, that henceforth they might reckon Themselves to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ||*

The former state related to the *forbearance* of God, in remitting them the *sins that were past, §* or those, which they had committed, before they had embraced Christianity; the latter has reference to the duties of their

* Rom. vi. 12, 19.

† Rom. iii. 23.

‡ Rom. iii. 24.

|| Rom. vi. 4, 11.

§ Rom. iii. 25.

Christian

Christian or converted state, to which they had been called through the grace of the Gospel, that they might *present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which was their reasonable Service.* *

In the fourth chapter, St. Paul, applying the example of *Abraham* to the case of the unbelieving *Gentiles*, asserts, that he was *justified by Faith* alone, and that *By Works* he had nothing *whereof to glory before God*; and confirms this assertion by producing an authority from the book of *Genesis*, in which that Patriarch is said to have *believed God*, and that such Belief was counted to him for *Righteousness*. † St. James also, makes use of the same example to shew, that *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only*; ‡ and, what is very remarkable, cites the same passage from *Genesis*, to prove that *Works wrought together with the Faith of Abraham*, and so perfected or completed his Justification, which St. Paul had cited to prove it was Faith alone, without works, that justified him. Now the usual way of clearing up this difficulty has been by taking the word *works*, as used by these Apostles, in two different senses; as if by works in St. Paul we were to understand the Ceremonies of the Religion of *Moses*, and in St. James the moral

* Rom. xii. 1.

† Gen. xv. 6.

‡ James ii.

duties of the Religion of *Jesus*. But besides what has been already offered to prove, that *St. Paul* under his Idea of *Works* comprehended the acts of Morality as well as a compliance with *Judaical Ceremonies*; one plain and unanswerable argument to shew, that, when speaking of *Abraham*, he could not possibly mean by *Works* the Rites of the *Jewish Law*, is this; that at the time *St. Paul* is here alluding to, the Law was not yet in being, and therefore such Rites could not yet be instituted: for so we are expressly told, that *faith was reckoned to Abraham for Righteousness, not when he was in circumcision but in uncircumcision.** A much better and more satisfactory method of settling this matter will be, by proceeding as in the former instance, and supposing *St. Paul* to speak of that Justification which *Abraham* received, immediately upon his assenting to the divine promises, and *St. James* of his continuance in a state of Justification afterwards. This not only removes all appearance of inconsistency between the two Apostles, but also makes the reasoning of both agreeable to the separate arguments they are treating of. *Abraham*, according to *St. Paul*, was, before he was called, an Idolater; and therefore could not be justified by Works, but by Faith:

* *Rom.* iv. 10.

Faith then being sufficient to justify before the Law was given, it will also be sufficient after the Law is abolished ; — the point he had to prove. Again, *Abraham*, according to *St. James*, on his obeying by faith the call of God, did not suffer this his faith to continue *dead* and inactive, but made it *perfect by works*: And therefore, by parity of reasoning, no Christian also will *finally* be saved through the bare act of believing, unless he afterwards improves such belief into a principle of virtuous practice. *

St. Paul, in the third chapter of his Epistle to *Titus*, has the following very memorable expressions. *After that the KINDNESS and LOVE of God our Saviour appeared, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, but according to his MERCY he saved us ; — that being JUSTIFIED BY GRACE, we should be made HEIRS according to the hope*

* This necessary distinction is well expressed by Archbishop *Tillotson*, in his third Sermon on *Tit.* iii. 8. “ *St. Paul* affirms, that a sinner is *at first* justified, and received into the favour of God, by a sincere profession of the Christian faith, without any works of righteousness preceding. *St. James* affirms, that no man *continues in a justified state*, and in favour with God, whose faith doth not bring forth good works ; and that it is not a true and lively faith, which doth not approve and shew itself to be so, by the works of obedience and a good life. — And the consideration of this will fully reconcile the seeming difference between *St. Paul* and *St. James*, in this matter of justification.”

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of eternal life. This is a faithful saying ; and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have BELIEVED in God, might be careful to maintain GOOD WORKS: These things are GOOD AND PROFITABLE UNTO MEN.

On this passage we may observe *first*, that the Christians here mentioned are said to be *saved* and *justified* through the *kindness*, the *love*, the *mercy*, and the *grace* of God ; and not by *Works of Righteousness* which they had done. *Secondly*, notwithstanding this their Salvation and Justification, it was yet incumbent on them who *Believed* to be careful to maintain *Good Works*, otherwise such salvation would *profit* them nothing. In *St. Paul's* opinion therefore a man might be justified and saved without his own works ; and yet be obliged as the Apostle adds, verse 14. *to maintain good works for necessary uses, that he might not be unfruitful.* How then must things so opposite be reconciled to each other ? Plainly thus : The Works spoken of in the former part of the sentence refer to the *Gentile* and *Unconverted* state of these Believers, when, (as it is expressed in the verses preceding,) they were *disobedient*, *foolish*, *serving divers lusts* and *pleasures* ; and those in the latter to the duties they were to fulfil after their becoming Christians ; such as being *subject to principalities*,
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obeying magistrates, speaking evil of no man, and the like. And consequently, the Justification and Salvation here mentioned have nothing at all to do with a man's final state of happiness in another world, but only denote the privilege these Christians had of being admitted, through the kindness and love of God our Saviour, into the blessings of Christ's Kingdom in this.

It is needless to pursue this Subject any further. Any one who consults the remaining Epistles of *St. Paul* or the two Epistles of *St. Peter*, will find exactly the same sentiments, and the same train of reasoning continued through them all. And here it is worth observing, that by far the greatest part of these Epistles were written to persons who *in times past had been Gentiles*, * dead in sins, and totally addicted to Idolatry. Out of this wretched condition all are said to be delivered by the mercy and grace of God *through faith, not of themselves, lest any man should boast.* † Henceforth they are exhorted to improve the present privileges they enjoyed to the securing for themselves *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the day of Christ* ‡; and those, who abuse them to the purposes of Vice and Immorality, are threatened with a severer and

* *Eph. ii. 11.* † *Eph. ii. 8, 9.* ‡ *2 Cor. iv. 17. Philipp. ii. 16.*
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heavier punishment *in the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgement of God.** The Epistles to the *Hebrews*, and of *St. James* and *St. John*, are directed to those who had formerly been *Jews*, but had afterwards embraced the Religion of *Jesus Christ*: And in these likewise men are perpetually reminded of the exceeding great value of the promises they had received; of the danger they would incur by *neglecting so great salvation;†* and of the indispensable obligation they were under to *hold fast the profession of their Faith without wavering,‡* and to keep the *Beginning of their Confidence stedfast unto the End. ||*

After so large and full a confirmation of the method here adopted to explain the meaning of the Text; it will not be matter of surprize to find this Interpretation capable of being still further established, by shewing its exact conformity to the eleventh and twelfth Articles of our church: which, although, when taken separately, the former of them seems to contradict the latter, yet, when illustrated by and contrasted with each other, appear to be consistent with themselves and with Scripture. The XIth Article, which is entitled, *Of the Justification of Man*, is as follows: "We are
" accounted righteous before God, only for the

* *Rom. ii. 5.* † *Heb. ii. 3.* ‡ *Heb. x. 23.* || *Heb. iii. 14.*
" merits

“ merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
 “ by Faith, and not for our own works or
 “ deservings. Wherefore that we are justified
 “ by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine,
 “ and very full of comfort.” † It is obvious,
 that if this article can be shewn to relate to
 the prior and unconverted state of Gentile
 Christians, who *were by nature the children of*
wrath, ‡ and by no acts of righteousness of
 their own enabled to claim an interest in
 the blessings of the Gospel; it will exactly a-
 gree to the sense of *St. Paul* in the Text: —
 That it *does* so, will, I think, become sufficient-
 ly evident by comparing it with the follow-
 ing Article, *Of Good Works*: “ Albeit that
 “ Good Works, which are the fruits of faith,
 “ AND FOLLOW AFTER JUSTIFICATION,
 “ cannot put away our Sins and endure the
 “ severity of God’s judgment; yet are they
 “ pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ;
 “ and do spring out necessarily of a true and
 “ lively Faith; insomuch that by them a live-
 “ ly Faith may be as evidently known, as a
 “ Tree discerned by the fruit.” Here we see,

† It is added, *as more largely is expressed in the Homily on*
Justification. And here I must again refer to the learned
 author of the *Principles and Practices of the Methodists*, &c.
 before mentioned. See page 66—75, where may be had a
 clear and concise account of the original end and design
 of these Homilies.

‡ *Eph. ii. 2.*

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that although in the eleventh article, it is asserted that “ we are justified by Faith alone, “ and not for our own works or deservings,” yet in this, “ Good Works, WHICH FOLLOW “ AFTER JUSTIFICATION,” are said to be “ pleasing and acceptable to God,” and ought to be esteemed as certain a sign of a lively and effectual Faith, as the fruit is of a lively and flourishing Tree. The distinction, that is observed in the two Articles, between works done *before* and those done *after* Justification, is so very striking; as plainly to shew, that the *former* of them is relative only to those works which precede our reception into the Covenant of God through Christ, (and is indeed the sense of St. *Paul*;) and the *latter* to those which are, or ought to be, subsequent to our being made Christians; and, which this article, (in conformity with St. *James*,) asserts to “ spring out *necessarily* “ of a *true* and *lively* faith;” *i. e.* *such* a Faith, as has its effects and operations in the Heart, and grows up into an uniform and steady Principle of love and obedience.* I know there are other ways of interpreting these articles;

* In the same sense are the words of St. *Augustine* to be understood, as they are quoted by Bishop *Bull*, in his *Harmonia Apostolica*, Dissert. posterior, cap. iii. “ *Bona opera sequuntur justificatum, non præcedunt justificandum.*” Although that author, to favour his own hypothesis, endeavours to wrest them from their plain and obvious meaning.

but

but this, which I have offered, seems best to preserve the consistency and connection between them both, and to keep clear of the difficulties that adhere so close to other methods of explaining them. *

To conclude this Subject with a few reflections from the whole; we may, in the *First* place, observe, that all that inconsistency and confusion, which have been so frequently said to embarrass this Epistle of *St. Paul*, are, by

* And now we shall know what to think of the following most extraordinary charge brought against the whole body of the Protestant clergy; the falshood of which, I trust, can only be equalled by the extreme insolence and uncharitableness of it. “ Since that time, I mean in the last Century, (writes this Holy Man,) our clergy have been gradually departing more and more from our Doctrines, Articles and Homilies; so that at length there was *scarce* a *Clergyman* to be found, but who preached contrary to the Articles he subscribed. And *almost all the Sermons*,” — *i. e.* all except those that have been preached and published by the *elect*, such as Mr. *Whitefield* and Mr. *Wesley*, whom, we are told, “ God raised up about twenty years ago, in mercy to our poor distressed Church,” and we may add, though last not least, such as Mr. *B——e* himself, the pious author of the extract here given, — “ almost all the Sermons, that have been published in the last Century, both by Bishops and Curates, are full of that Soul-destroying Doctrine, that we are to be justified partly by our own works, and partly by Christ’s merits.” — And again, “ Though our Articles and Homilies continue sound and evangelical, yet our clergy have departed once more from both, and are advancing to *Rome* again with hasty strides; preaching in spite of Articles and Subscription, that most pernicious, papistical, and damnable Doctrine of Justification by Faith and Works. Which Doctrine, I am verily assured, none can hold, and be in a state of Salvation.” *Fragment of the True Religion*, pag. 20, 21, 22.

the exposition of the Text here given, clearly and effectually removed. From what has been said it appears, the doctrine, which the Apostle advances, is briefly this : That *before* a Heathen's *first* or *conditional* Justification, by which he was admitted into the Kingdom of Christ here on earth, works of righteousness *were not* necessary; but that, *after* such admission, and to secure what may be called his *second* and *final* Justification, works of righteousness *were* necessary. On the foot of this interpretation, all the obscurity before complained of vanishes at once ; the Apostle's method of reasoning appears to be uniform and consistent with itself, and the doctrine of the Text to be in perfect harmony with that of our Saviour and the rest of the Apostles. This *first* Justification was, we have seen, peculiar to those who were converted from a state of Paganism to Christianity; and was conferred upon them, when they were received into the communion of the church, by Baptism ; by which they are said to be *made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal life* ;* and in order to which nothing more was requisite, than a profession of Repentance and Faith in Christ. The *second* Justification, by which sincere Christians become entitled to the actual Possession of their heavenly Inheri-

* Titus iii. 7.

tance,

tance, is reserved till the general consummation of all things; and is to be obtained by nothing less than *a patient continuance in well doing*, † and a constant and unshaken *enduring to the end*. ‡ It is of the *first* Justification that *St. Paul* must always be understood to speak, when he affirms it is to be had by *Grace*, and not by *Works*: Our *final* Justification, although, in one sense of the words, it may indeed, like the other, be said to be by *Grace*, (inasmuch as, by the terms of the Christian covenant, a faultless and unfinishing obedience is no longer required, and our poor and defective services will now be graciously accepted through the merits of our Redeemer,) is yet so far dependent upon our own *works*, as to demand our utmost and most unwearied endeavours to advance the nearest possible to that most perfect pattern of moral purity, which the Gospel proposes to us in the life and example of our blessed Saviour.

Secondly, We may, from the general argument of this Epistle of *St. Paul*, collect what it is which specifically distinguishes the *Jewish* from the *Christian* Religion, and in what the superior excellence of the latter of these principally consists. By the original Covenant into which God entered with *Abraham*, it was

† *Rom.* ii. 7.‡ *Matth.* xxiv. 13.

promised to him in the most comprehensive terms, that *in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed.** But, as the full extent of this promise was not to take place till several hundreds of years after it was given, and the infection of Idolatry and Polytheism began then to spread far and wide; it pleased the Almighty, in order to prevent the Knowledge of himself from being totally lost and corrupted, to *add* to the *patriarchal* Religion, which then prevailed, the Ceremonial Law of the *Jews*, as a temporary expedient to preserve the important doctrine of the Unity of the Divine Nature, till such time as *the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*† During this interval, all the manifestations of himself, which God condescended to make to the sons of men, were confined to the *Jewish* people only; the rest of mankind are described in Scripture as *sitting in darkness and the region of the shadow of death; ‡ aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*|| In this state they continued, till *in the fullness of time* God sent forth his Son.§ And now it was that we, *who sometimes were FAR OFF, are said to be made NIGH by the blood of Christ.*** The *Jewish* Oeconomy,

* Gen. xii. 3. Gal. iii. 8, 16. † Gal. iii. 19. ‡ Matt. iv. 16.
 || Eph. ii. 12. § Gal. iv. 4. ** Eph. ii. 13.

which,

which, as *St. Paul* expresses it, served the office of a *Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*, || was dissolved, or rather, to speak more properly, it was extended and enlarged: the true original Religion of the Patriarchs was again restored, and, by preaching the glad tidings of salvation to men of all nations and languages, the divine promises to *Abraham* were in their truest and most literal sense fulfilled. In this manner this remarkable change is described by *St. Paul*; as appears from the following words of his Epistle to the *Galatians*: § *Christ*, faith he, *bath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; — THAT THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM MIGHT COME ON THE GENTILES, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit THROUGH FAITH.* From henceforth, the Kingdom of God has assumed a new form: all mankind without exception are freely admitted into it: *Israel* is now become the common name of the Christian, as before it had been of the *Jewish Church* *: by *ONE Spirit we are all baptized into ONE BODY, whether we be JEWS or GENTILES* : † *There is now One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of US ALL. For he is our peace, who bath*

|| *Gal.* iii. 24. § *ib.* iii. 13, 14. * *Gal.* vi. 16. † *1 Cor.* xii. 13.
made

made BOTH (Jews and Gentiles) ONE; and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, (even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances,) for to make in himself, OF TWAIN, ONE NEW MAN, so making peace. — Deeply sensible of the inestimable worth of such exceeding great and precious promises,† on this account it was, that St. Paul so strenuously set himself to vindicate the right of his Gentile converts, and to establish the title they had of being called into the Fellowship of the Gospel.‡ On this account it was, that he counted all things, all his Jewish advantages in which the rest of his countrymen so highly gloried, but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.¶ And on this account he constantly in every prayer of his gave thanks to God himself, (and by his example has taught us to do the same) for making known to him the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards mankind, through Christ Jesus; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; and are delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.§*

* Eph. iv. 5, 6. iii. 14, 15. † 2 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Philipp. i. 5.
 ¶ Philipp. iii. 8. § See Philipp. i. 4, 5. Eph. i. 16 — 20.
 ii. 7. i. 7. Rom. viii. 21.

Lastly,

Lastly, we may observe, to the honour of the Christian Religion, and to the comfort of its sincere professors, how admirably it has adapted the conditions, on which it proposes to us Life and Immortality, to the present weakness and infirmity of human nature. In a less corrupt and depraved state of humanity, an exact and perfect conformity to the divine Law might with reason have been expected from us; by which we should have had a claim upon God's *Justice* to give us the reward, to which we had become entitled by a scrupulous and unfinning obedience: And such a state as this is, in Scripture-Phrase, called *Justification by Works*, and *by the Deeds of the Law*. But the Law being in itself so extensive and so pure, and Mankind so frail and liable to offend, as never to be able constantly to act up to the strictness of the letter of it; it pleased God, in mercy to a sinful world, to publish a new Revelation of his will by Jesus Christ, through whom we are promised forgiveness of all former transgressions, and put into a capacity of obtaining eternal happiness, on the condition of a sincere, though imperfect repentance and amendment for the future. This the Scripture calls *Justification by Faith and by Grace, without Works*: and it is all along opposed to that *Justification, which is by*

I Law,

Law, as utterly inconsistent with it, and one of them in the nature of the thing incompatible with the other. By this method, or by the other, must every man be finally justified before his Maker. No *third* expedient can be thought on; and to our own choice it is left, whether we will rest our expectation of happiness from God, upon his Justice or upon his Mercy. To conclude then: If, rejecting all confidence on your own merits, 'you are willing to confess yourself a Sinner, and on that plea to recline all your hopes upon the *Mercy* of God; behold that Mercy held out to you through the merits of Christ Jesus, and ready to be dispensed to all, who, on the mild and easy terms of his Gospel, qualify themselves to partake of it. If, on the other hand, you proudly trust to your own obedience, and think that alone sufficient to entitle you to favour; even here you may be certain, the Judge of the world will do righteously, and, since you refused to be saved by his *Mercy*, his *Justice* will most impartially acquit or condemn you according to your deservings.

4 OC 58

F I N I S.

